

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 WELLIN 01697 062234Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 EB-07 TRSE-00

AGR-05 OMB-01 IGA-02 /101 W

-----071046Z 058846 /22

R 060503Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3156

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SUVA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 1697

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OTRA, PFOR, EAID, MASS, TN

SUBJECT: AMEBASSADOR SELDEN'S SEMI-ANNUAL VISIT TO TONGA

REF: SUVA 1574 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: KING TAUFU'AHAU TUPOA IV INDICATED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD MADE NO FOLLOW-UP ON THEIR PROPOSALS OF A YEAR AGO TO BUILD INTERNATIONAL CLASS AIRPORT AT NUKU'ALOFA IN RETURN FOR FISHING PORT IN TONGA AND AIR TURN AROUND FO SOVIET FISHING CREWS AT NEW AIRPORT. INSTEAD, KING CLAIMS THAT CONSORTIUM OF CANADIAN BANKS ARE TO CONSTRUCT AIRPORT RUNWAY CAPABLE OF RECEIVING 747 AIR CRAFT. END OF SUMMARY.

1. DURING MY SEMI-ANNUAL VISIT TO TONGA FROM APRIL 28 TO MAY 3, I CALLED ON AND HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH KING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 WELLIN 01697 062234Z

TAUFU'AHAU TUPOA IV, ACTING PRIME MINISTE
TUITA, SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT TANIELLA TAFUA,
MINISTER OF EDUCATION DR. LANGI KAVALIKU, AND OTHER
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. IN ADDITION, I CONFERRED WITH
THE BRITISH AND NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSIONERS, THE
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA, THE DIRECTOR
OF OUR PEACE CORPS, A NUMBER OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS,

AND NUMEROUS PRIVATE CITIZENS. I ALSO HOSTED A RECEPTION FOR SEVERAL HUNDRED AND MY WIFE AND I WERE OFFICIALLY ENTERTAINED.

2. DURING VERY LONG CONVERSATION THE KING INDICATED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD MOVED NO FURTHER ON THEIR PROPOSALS OF LAST YEAR TO EXTEND NUKU'ALOFA AIRPORT TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS IN RETURN FOR A FISHING PORT AND ASSOCIATED SHORE FACILITIES. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE KING MADE A POINT OF CRITICIZING THE SLOWNESS OF THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY AND IMPLIED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE NO LONGER IN THE PICTURE AS FAR AS TONGA IS CONCERNED. FROM WHAT THE KING SAID IT SEEMS OBVIOUS THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE SHOWN NO FURTHER INTEREST IN THEIR INITIAL OVERTURES. WHETHER THE KING WOULD CONTINUE TO RULE THEM OUT OF THE PICTURE IF THEIR ORIGINAL INTEREST IS RENEWED IS UNCERTAIN.

3. WITH HIS USUAL BLITHE OPTIMISM THE KING STATED THAT A CONSORTIUM OF CANADIAN BANKS HAD AGREED TO EXTEND THE NUKU'ALOFA RUNWAY TO A 707/747 STANDARD WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS. IN THE MEANTIME, HE EXPECTS THE AUSTRALIANS TO IMPROVE THE AIR STRIP FOR 727 AIRCRAFT. HE CASUALLY INQUIRED IF OUR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN EXTRA STRENGTHENING OF THE RUNWAY AT THE INTO-THE WIND TOUCH DOWN POINT SO THAT THE BIGGEST UNITED STATES MILITARY AIRCRAFT COULD LAND IN TONGA. I BELIEVE THE KING WOULD LIKE SOME AMERICAN REACTION ON THIS INQUIRY, AND I WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 WELLIN 01697 062234Z

ANYTHING I MIGHT APPROPRIATELY PASS ON TO HIM.

4. COMMENTING ON THE ABSENCE OF TRADE UNIONS IN TONGA, THE KING SAID HE WAS NOT OPPOSED TO UNIONS THAT WORKED TO IMPROVE THE "LOT OF THE WORKER," BUT THAT HE DID NOT APPROVE OF UNIONS THAT ATTEMPTED TO CHANGE ALL ASPECTS OF SOCIETY.

5. CROWN PRINCE TUPOUTOA ASKED ME IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR TONGA TO PURCHASE SOME NEW MILITARY VEHICLES FOR TRANSPORTATION PURPOSES OR WHETHER SUCH VEHICLES MIGHT BE BOUGHT THROUGH DEFENSE PROPERTY DISPOSAL. ANY INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT THAT CAN BE PASSED ON TO THE GOVERNMENT OF TONGA WILL BE APPRECIATED.

6. DURING TWO MEETINGS WITH MINISTER OF EDUCATION KAVALIKU, WE WERE ASKED TO CONSIDER MAKING AN AMERICAN MARKET RESEARCHER AVAILABLE TO INVESTIGATE THE EXPORT OF TONGAN AGRICULTURAL

PRODUCTS TO HONOLULU AND THE WEST COAST. THIS MATTER HAS BEEN TREATED AT GREATER LENGTH IN A SEPARATE CABLE FROM EMBASSY SUVA (REFTEL). IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO ACT FAVORABLY ON THIS REQUEST WE WOULD BE PROVIDING NEEDED ASSISTANCE AT SMALL COST.

7. DURING MY SOJOURN IN TONGA, ADDITIONAL DETAILS WERE PUBLISHED IN THE "TONGA CHRONICLE" (APRIL 29) OF A 25 MILLION DEUTSCHE MARK PROGRAM TO HELP THE TONGAN GOVERNMENT DEVELOP SHIPING AND TRAIN

MERCHANT NAVY PERSONNEL. THE HAMBURG-SUED COMPANY WOULD UNDERTAKE THE PROGRAM, ACCORDING TO A STATEMENT SUPPOSEDLY MADE BY A COMPANY SPOKESMAN IN HAMBURG THE PREVIOUS WEEK. THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENTS WRE BOTH SAID TO BE INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM WHICH WOULD CENTER ON THE ESTABLISHMENT IN CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 WELLIN 01697 062234Z

MAY OF THE SHIPPING CORPORATION OF POLYNESIA TO BE REGISTERED IN NUKU'ALOFA. (COMMENT: GIVEN THE ALWAYS UPBEAT MOOD IN NUKU'ALOFA, REFLECTING THE KING'S ALWAYS OPTIMISTIC NATURE, NO ASSESSMENT IS VENTURED CONCERNING THE FACTUAL ACCURACY OF ARTICLE. END COMMENT).

8. COMMENT: WHILE THE KIN AND HIS GOVERNMENT CONTINUE TO GRASP AT ANY AID STRAW THAT MAY PASS IN THE WIND, THEY REMAIN BASICALLY FRIENDLY TO THE UNITED STATES AND THE WEST.. IN CASE OF ANY EMERGENCY I BELIEVE THEY CAN CONTINUE TO BE COUNTED ON. END COMMENT. SELDEN

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